(e) The project is likely to be completed after 33 months of the Financial Closure.

Impact of Open Sky Policy on National Carriers

*219. SHRI R. SHUNMUGASUNDARAM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the 'Open Sky Policy' of allowing private airlines to operate between Indian cities and the destinations abroad has affected the prospects of our National Carriers commercially;

(b) if so, what are the proposals to improve their prospects; and

(c) if not, whether the private airlines will be allowed to operate between far off destinations and also increase their frequencies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Government has permitted Private Domestic Scheduled Operators (PDSOs) to operate only to SAARC countries subject to availability of traffic rights and provision for designation of multiple airlines in the respective Air Services Agreements. This is unlikely to have any adverse impact on the commercial prospects of our national carriers as private airlines can operate only out of the unutilized Indian entitlements.

Utilisation of ground water

*220. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Ground Water Board has examined the indiscriminate exploitation of ground water reserves from aquifers at Plachimada, Palakkad, Kerala and Kaladera, Rajasthan by the multinational soft drink giants.

(b) if so, the details thereof including the action taken against the soft drink plants;

(c) whether any study has been conducted to estimate the extent of utilization of ground water by manufacturers of soft drinks and mineral water and for other purposes;

(d) if so, the details thereof, State-wise and category-wise; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): (a) to (e) The Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) has examined utilisation of ground water by soft drink units located at Plachimada village, Palakkad district, Kerala and at Kaladera, Rajasthan. As per CGWB, declining trends in ground water levels in the range of 0.02 m/yr to 0.9 m/yr and average 1.43 m/yr has been observed in an around soft drink units located at Plachimada village, Palakkad district, Kerala and at Kaladera, Rajasthan, respectively. This declining trend cannot be attributed only to ground water withdrawal by soft drink manufacturing units. The declining trend in ground water level is a cumulative effect of the ground water withdrawal for irrigation, domestic and industrial purposes.

Water being a State subject, it is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Government to take remedial steps to check over-exploitation of ground water. The following remedial measures are also envisaged in this regard by the Central Government:

(i) Regulation of ground water withdrawal.

(ii) Adopting artificial recharge.

(iii) Treatment and recycling of industrial waste water.

The CGWB has been asked to conduct special detailed studies to work out the actual volume of ground water used for the purposes of irrigation, domestic and industries with a view to know the factual position of use of ground water and its impact on ground water regime.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Feeder Airline in West Bengal

696. SHRI SHANKAR ROY CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government has received any proposal from the Government of West-Bengal for establishing a feeder airline within the State; and

(b) if so, the action proposed to be taken in this regard alongwith the present position of the case?